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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8982  
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SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR AF/E

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [PINR](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG INTERIOR MINISTER SLIGHTLY WOUNDED  
IN MOGADISHU ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

¶1. (SBU) Recently-appointed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Interior Minister Sheikh Abdikadir Ali Omar was slightly injured by the explosion of a roadside bomb or mine in an apparent assassination attempt as he was walking near Bakara market, Mogadishu, at about 9:30 (local) on March 26. One of Omar's assistants was killed in the attack and one of his bodyguards was wounded. No organization has to date claimed responsibility for the attack.

¶2. (SBU) At a subsequent press conference, Omar refused to speculate on who might have perpetrated the attack, noting only that the attackers likely came from the ranks of those "opposed to peace." Omar urged Somalis to join the TFG's reconciliation effort. TFG MP Osman Libah told us that he and other members of Parliament, as well as some of the leadership of Hisbul Islam expressed their solidarity with Omar after his press conference. Newly-appointed TFG Intelligence Chief Mohamed Sheikh told us in a separate telephone conversation from Mogadishu that he suspected that al-Shabaab was behind the attack on Omar. (Note: Al-Shabaab has promised to attack those who ally themselves with the TFG.)

¶3. (SBU) Omar is a member of the Hawiye/Habr Gedr/Salebaan sub-clan and was Deputy Chairman of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) when it seized control of Mogadishu in 2006. He retains control of what is estimated to be the most powerful non-clan militia in Mogadishu. His "defection" to the TFG from the ranks of the ICU may have triggered the March 26 assassination attempt.

¶4. (SBU) The attempt on Omar follows two earlier roadside explosions targeting Somalis associated with the TFG. On March 11, a roadside explosion killed General Ubayd Ali Fidow (Abgaal/Warsangeli) in Shibis District. Fidow had worked as security chief for former Prime Minister Gedi. No organization claimed responsibility for the attack. On March 15, Wadajir District Commissioner Ahmed Hassan "Dai" survived a roadside explosion as he was traveling in Mogadishu. "Dai's" driver and two bodyguards were reportedly killed. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack on "Dai."  
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